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# FOOD INFORMATION



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## FARM LABOR CAMPAIGN

### *Mobilizing the Community for Farm Work*

The major food-production problem is to provide enough labor. To plant, care for, harvest, and process the crops needed by our armed forces, our allies, and our civilian population is agriculture's main war task.

Farmers have lost many of their workers to the armed forces and to war industries. Yet they face record food-production requirements. Migrant workers, who always have helped in farm work at peak seasons, are in many cases no longer available. They are in other war work or cannot move from area to area because of transportation difficulties. Deferment of farm workers will check additional losses. But at the peak season 3,500,000 workers will be required in addition to those already on farms.

Many vital war crops were saved last year by workers who took "time out" from their regular jobs. High school students, housewives, businessmen, and others in similar occupations helped. Such unselfish, patriotic community effort is needed everywhere in 1943. Complete local mobilization of townspeople for emergency periods of heavy farm work will be necessary in thousands of communities. This movement will supplement what governmental agencies can do to bring in additional labor and what farmers can do to increase efficiency of the labor on the farm.

### The U. S. Crop Corps<sup>1/</sup> Plan

The Government's plan is to recruit and place a U. S. Crop Corps of 3,500,000 workers. The War Food Administration, the land-grant colleges, the Employment Service of the War Manpower Commission, the Office of Education, the Office of Civilian Defense, and the Office of War Information are backing this move. Also cooperating in the plan are national advertising agencies, retail associations, canning associations, radio networks, the press, civic organizations, women's organizations, youth organizations, and similar groups and agencies.

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<sup>1/</sup> U. S. Crop Corps is the national name for workers on farms or in food-processing plants. In some States other names are used.

Year-round workers as well as summer, seasonal, and short-period emergency workers will make up the Corps. It will include local businessmen, high school and college students, city housewives, and others.

Informational materials are now being released to newspapers, over the radio, in advertisements, in posters, and in other ways. The purpose is to call attention to the need for farm workers and urge people to be ready to answer the local farm-labor mobilization call.

Responsibility for the plan locally is centered in the county agricultural agent of the Extension Service. The Extension Service is a cooperative agency of the United States Department of Agriculture and the State agricultural college. In predominantly rural counties the county agricultural agent is usually located at the county seat. He will be charged with coordinating the work of all local agencies and groups in the local mobilization, for getting available workers to the farms where they are needed, for explaining the program to farmers, and for helping farmers to make the best use of all available workers.

Recruiting farm workers in large cities will be done by the United States Employment Service and the County Defense Councils by arrangement with the Extension Service.

A half million high school and college students will be recruited and given background training through the schools, particularly through the high school Victory Corps. This phase of the plan will be handled by the Federal Office of Education in cooperation with the Extension Service.

A women's Land Army is also being organized as a part of the Crop Corps by the Extension Service in cooperation with women's organizations, the United States Employment Service, and the Office of Civilian Defense.

#### Complete Local Mobilization

Cooperation of all agencies and groups active in the community will be necessary. In this respect defense councils, as the focal group of community war effort, can be particularly effective in getting the various groups and agencies to coordinate their activities.

City officials can dramatize to urban residents the importance of getting crops harvested and processed. They can give official sanction to the mobilization, release municipal employees for farm work, and assume a leading role in over-all plans for mobilization.

Local schools can recruit and train Victory Farm Volunteers. School boards can, if necessary, close schools in peak seasons when additional farm workers are needed, and they may change school hours, vacations, and school terms, to free students when they are needed most.

Chambers of commerce and businessmen can sponsor window displays, posters, and advertisements, showing local farm-labor needs. Stores and other business houses can close for a few days or half days so that employees can help in farm-work emergencies.

Service clubs, women's clubs, church groups, civic bodies, and youth organizations can give farm work social standing as a vital war job by assisting in the local mobilization and by enlisting as groups for farm work.

Transportation companies can help in getting Crop Corps workers to and from work.

Newspapers, radio stations, and motion-picture theaters can explain local labor needs, tell where to register, report progress of the mobilization, and give other essential support.

Block and neighborhood leaders, when necessary, can make a door-to-door canvass to explain local farm-labor needs to their neighbors and ask them to help all they can.

#### Suggested Local Organization

A farm-labor advisory committee, composed mostly of farm people, already is helping the county agricultural agent. This committee will aid in determining local farm-labor needs, place new workers where they are needed, and help in developing plans to make the most efficient use of all labor.

A farm-labor mobilization committee will be needed in each urban community where local mobilization is necessary. Its membership should include farmers and other leading citizens, city officials, and representatives of the main groups and agencies that can help. The efforts of the committee will include one or more of three major activities:

1. Obtaining the active participation of agencies, groups, organizations, and community leaders, in the mobilization campaign and in getting farm work done.
2. Promoting a publicity campaign to inform urban people of farm-labor needs, and of the procedures for enlisting people for farm work.
3. Developing plans for a house-to-house canvass to enlist people for farm work and assisting in the canvass.

A publicity campaign will need to be organized in every mobilizing community, in order to arrange for the fullest use of local newspapers, radio stations, and motion-picture theaters. It will be essential to collect and prepare local information for use by public speakers,



and for window displays, posters, and advertisements. A special committee or subcommittee of local writers and promotional people may work with the mobilization committee on this job. Such a committee should include representatives of newspapers, radio stations, and "movie" houses, as well as a local sign painter, an artist or art teacher, and information representatives of the chamber of commerce, United States Employment Service, county defense council; schools, churches, civic and other groups and agencies. A special kit of promotional suggestions and available materials will be furnished the county agricultural agent for use by each of these local committees.

For house-to-house calls a committee or subcommittee may be needed to arrange for material and the training of persons making the calls on available workers. Office of Civilian Defense leaders, neighborhood leaders, or some other group will be glad to make such visits. Special training will be needed so that the callers can explain local farm-labor needs, how many workers are needed and when, physical requirements of the jobs the workers will be expected to do, wages, transportation, and other details.

#### . Drive Based on Local Needs

The local mobilization drive must be based on local farm-labor needs. County USDA War Boards asked farmers to list their needs for additional farm labor when they made their production goal pledges.

This information can be obtained from the county agricultural agent. Arrangements are being worked out locally both for receiving requests from farmers for farm labor and for listing all prospective workers. Those who enlist will be informed when they are needed.

A reserve list of volunteer workers who will be ready when needed should be available, but recruitment of more workers than can be placed will hinder rather than help. Emphasis must also be placed on selective mobilization. Farm work is hard work. Only people who are willing and able to do hard work will be of most help on the farm.

When mobilization in the community is necessary, everybody in the community can take part. To make that help count most, they should consult the county agricultural agent, who will know local labor needs, and who is coordinating all effort in the farm-labor program. Persons living in large cities should get in touch with the United States Employment Service office and the local defense council.

**FARM WORK IS WAR WORK!**